

the Atlantic. The standards are high both in content and clarity and the book is up-to-date. The editors, with the assistance of Ellie Breeze, have achieved a remarkable consistency of style and presentation. More tables and illustrations might have been helpful and captions to the tables should more often state the country of origin of the data rather than leaving the reader to infer this from the chapter title. In view of the paucity of cross-referencing, the 8-page index is an essential feature. Though 'intended to be a comprehensive textbook', it has in places the excitement of a journal review and some contributions are really thoughtful and stimulating essays. This well produced volume is highly recommended for post-graduate students, practitioners, and all concerned with public health.

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Monoclonal Antibodies and Cancer

Barbara D Boss *et al.* (ed) pp 299 US\$35

ISBN 0-12-118880-9

Orlando, Florida: Academic Press 1983

The monoclonal revolution as it relates to cancer therapy and diagnosis is the subject of this book. It details the proceedings of the annual symposium at the Salk Institute funded by Dr Armand Hammer.

It is creatively set out, with each section divided into 'the present' and 'the future', thus allowing us a review of what has been achieved by the technique discovered in 1975 by Milstein and Kohler, and a glimpse into what scientists feel may be the future of these reagents.

It is true to say that the therapeutic hopes generated by the discovery of these antibodies has never been realized, and this is nowhere best illustrated than in this book. Trials of immunotherapy in leukaemia and lymphoma have met with limited success: one is left with the question of 'how to improve the potency of antibodies in eliminating tumours cells?' (Ron Levy) or, after reading the chapter by Koprowski, one has the impression that a cure for gastrointestinal cancer has been effected by dramatic results in some patients but inadequate and incomparable photographs of radiographic 'cures' leave one with considerable doubt. Foon and colleagues also demonstrate a reduction in cell numbers but at the considerable expense of pulmonary toxicity presumably due to aggregation.

A major future role of monoclonal antibodies may well be antibodies to receptors but this is only scantily covered in this book. Interesting studies by Bernstein's group demonstrate the problems of penetration of antibodies into subcutaneous nodules. These they term 'extravascular tumors' and of course it is so often these tumours that kill the patients.

A more promising application is the one of antibodies to 'clean-up' bone marrow to rescue patients; this appears possible from the paper by Baumgartner (Inselspital, Bern), although it is not absolutely clear that the regenerating bone marrow regenerates from the 'purged' marrow since these workers only used a small dose of radiation.

Immunotoxins, as used by Vitetta *et al.*, seem to work with polyclonal and monoclonal antibodies. Its use in graft-versus-host disease, as explored by Neville and colleagues, is also a major potential of these reagents but long-term results are awaited. Attaching radiation to antibodies has always been

attractive but the experiments of Strand *et al.* show that specific and nonspecific ^{131}I -immunoglobulin are both active in this respect. Rapid metabolism of conjugates was also seen.

Some of these problems could be overcome by the construction of human monoclonal antibodies – many of the myeloma cell lines for fusion purposes are still inadequate: fusion frequency and immunoglobulin production are still too low to permit us any chance to select antibodies of interest.

It is, of course, the diagnostic field that we need to examine most carefully. It is therefore slightly disappointing that this area is not covered as comprehensively as those on therapy, i.e. 2 general, 2 on breast cancer, 2 on colon cancer, 1 on glioma and 1 on lymphoid neoplasms, and a further set of more fundamental articles on HLA-DR expressions and human transferrins. No clear picture emerges about the vital role of monoclonal antibodies, both in tumour diagnosis and in understanding the nature of cancer originating in a particular organ.

Radioimmunolocalization has still not proved itself as a viable technique in being clinically useful to detect small amounts of metastatic disease.

The most interesting application in the fullness of time may be in unravelling the cellular biology of normal tissues. This is exemplified by two papers on breast cancer.

In summary, this is a useful book providing a tantalizing amount of the 'state of the art' concerning monoclonal antibodies and their potential in the therapy of cancer, but a poor review of their diagnostic potential.

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Tropical Urology and Renal Disease

I Husain (ed) pp 435 £30

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Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone 1984

The aim of this attractive and moderately priced book is to provide a 'tropical extension' to the standard textbooks dealing with urology and renal disease. The editor has successfully persuaded his 31 contributors to produce useful summaries of the diagnosis and treatment of essentially tropical conditions, such as the nephrotic syndrome in malaria, chyluria in filariasis, and the various complications of urinary schistosomiasis. There are also chapters dealing with geographical pathology and universal urological diseases which are more prevalent in the tropics, for example, genitourinary tuberculosis, urolithiasis and urinary vaginal fistula.

To help health workers in underdeveloped areas, the book contains six appendices on endoscopic instruments, catheters and other appliances, sterilization techniques, antibiotics and drugs for treating urological diseases, data collection and retrieval methods and, rather incongruously in this book, which will be mainly of interest to hospital doctors, an appendix on low-cost methods of sanitation. The book is clearly presented and well illustrated with plenty of references to the relevant literature.

It can be recommended as a useful reference book for medical practitioners and surgeons working in developing countries.

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